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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present an outline of the occupational education program that is being implemented in the rural community of Apex, North Carolina. Cast in the form of an exemplary program and representing a total approach to the problem of occupational education for elementary and secondary school children, the program will provide an integrated educational experience in which each component of the educational system is carefully matched with every other component to produce the greatest possible efficiency. The Apex program is designed to provide for four phases: (1) increased attention to counseling and placement, (2) introduction of occupational education into the lower grades, (3) expansion of occupational education in the middle grades, and (4) provision for additional occupational education and guidance services in upper grades. The all-inclusive goal of this exemplary program is to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive occupational education program in a rural school system. The process objectives are included, and the product objectives are appended. (GE)

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THE PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXEMPLARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

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THE PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXEMPLARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

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1970

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CENTER FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

North Carolina State University at Raleigh,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Project No. BR 7-0348

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PREFACE

Among the many possibilities opened up through the passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, one of the most important was the possibility for developing exemplary programs under the provisions of Part D of the Amendments. In some measure, the provisions of this part of the Amendments appear to be an attempt on the part of Congress to follow-up its House Report 1647 by "putting its money where it mouth is." The House Report implied, through its attention to the five recommendations of the Advisory Council on Vocational Education, that new approaches would be demanded of vocational educators, and by its inclusion of Part D in the Vocational Education Amendments Congress insured that funds would be available to spur research toward those new approaches.

This paper presents a description of only one of the many different programs now being put into effect nationwide. It is an entirely new program, based on what we believe to be a very sound and worthwhile concept; the holistic approach to education. The program itself could scarcely be considered a panacea for all of the educational ills which currently afflict our society, indeed the program itself may have no value beyond the specific school system for which it was designed. However, in this case, it is not the program which needed to be communicated to others in the field of education, but rather the rationale that supports the program and the methodology used in turning that rationale into an active program. We, at the Center for Occupational Education, feel that this type of approach holds great promise for translating the legislative mandate of yesterday into the educational reality of tomorrow.

The Center would like to extend its appreciation to the authors of

report both for the report itself, and for their roles in the development of the Apex program. A special note of thanks is due Mrs. Joan Zicherman and Mr. Darrell Myrick for their assistance in editing and reworking the paper. Prepublication reviews of the paper were provided by:

Dr. Joseph Clary, Executive Director, State Advisory Council on Vocational Educaton.

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Dr. Robert T. Williams, Assistant Professor of Industrial and Technical Education.

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John K. Coster
Director

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INTRODUCTION

During the latter part of the decade of the sixties, the high level of youth unemployment precipitated renewed attention to the role of vocational education in providing educational opportunity for individuals in all strata of American society. One of the most significant results of this renewed attention was the inclusion of the concept of vocational education in the more general concept of occupational education, which now included both pre-vocational and vocational education. The thinking which led to the revision of the vocational education concept was expressed most clearly in House Report 1647 of the 90th Congress, Second Session:

> . . . The General Subcommittee on Education has concluded that the following five ideas recommended by the Advisory Council (on Vocational Education) deserve serious consideration: (1) any dichotomy between academic education and vocational education is outmoded; (2) developing attitudes, basic educational skills and habits are as important as skill training; (3) prevocational orientation is necessary to introduce pupils to the world of work and provide motivation; (4) meaningful career choices are a legitimate concern of vocational education; (5) vocational programs should be developmental, not terminal, providing maximum options for students to go on to college, pursue postsecondary vocational and technical training, or find employment. (House Committee on Education and Labor, 1968).

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 provided means for implementing these House Report ideas by including provisions for developing and administering exemplary programs and projects designed to produce new methodologies in occupational education. Under Part D (Exemplary Programs and Projects) of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (P.L. 90-576, Section 141), Congress defined the purpose of exemplary programs and projects:

> . . . to stimulate, through Federal financial support, new ways to create a bridge between school and earning a living for young people who are still in school, who have left school either by

graduation or dropping out, or who are in postsecondary programs for vocational preparation, and to promote cooperation between public education and manpower agencies.

Grant Venn, Associate Commissioner for Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (Policy Paper AVL-V70-1, 1969) pinpointed the priorities that should be established for an exemplary occupational education program in light of the 1968 Amendments:

1. Provisions for broad occupational orientation at the elementary and secondary school levels so as to increase student awareness of the range of options open to them in the world of work.

2. Provisions for work experience, cooperative education and similar programs, making possible a wide variety of offerings in many occupational areas.

3. Provisions for students not previously enrolled in vocational programs to receive specific training in job entry skills just prior to the time that they leave the school. (Some of these training programs might be very intensive and of short duration.)

4. Provision for intensive occupational guidance and counseling during the last years of school and for initial placement of all students at the completion of their schooling. (Placement might be in a job or in postsecondary occupational training. Placement should be accomplished in cooperation with appropriate employment services, manpower agencies, etc.)

5. Provisions for the grantee or contractor to carry the program on with support from regular funding sources after the termination of the Federal assistance under Part D of P.L. 90-576. (Federal assistance under Part D cannot exceed three years.)

The development of the exemplary program in occupational education that is now being implemented in Apex, North Carolina, stemmed directly from the mix of the above legislative intents and the stated policy of the U. S. Office of Education. In particular, the five ideas contained in House Report 1647 were a strong conditioning factor in the development of the holistic approach to education which characterizes the Apex program.

These five ideas may be seen either as a series of discrete recommendations or as a total complex outlining a unified approach to educational problems. Without denying the achievements of existing programs aimed at the solution of problems in education, it should be noted that these programs are largely piecemeal in their approach. That is, one aspect of an occupational curriculum is usually treated exhaustively (e.g. counseling) to the virtual exculsion of others. Such an approach appears to have certain advantages, particularly with respect to the evaluation of program results. However, the advantages may be more apparent than real.

If we improve one limited segment of the educational system--counseling, for instance--we expect an improvement in the products of the educational system. This improvement can be evaluated and ascribed to the change in counseling. In such an evaluation it is necessarily assumed that the rest of the system remains constant, and the change is due to the change in counseling. The implications are obvious, if the remainder of the system is not coordinated with the unit which has been changed, the possibility exists that overall efficiency has not been reached. Thus, the total effect which may be available from a change in any one unit in a system is impossible to determine because the operation of the single unit is obscured in the operation of the total system.

Stated more technically, we may presume that the interactive effects of a total approach to a system may produce much greater efficiency than a linear sum of single treatment effects might indicate. While the evaluation of individual components of such a coordinated system might be more difficult, the benefits in efficiency and integration are evident.

The purpose of this paper is to present an outline of the occupational education program that is being implemented in the rural community

of Apex, North Carolina. It represents a total approach to the problem of occupational education for elementary and secondary school children. Cast in the form of an exemplary program covering grades 1 through 12, the program to be discussed will provide an integrated educational experience in which each component of the educational system is carefully matched with every other component to produce the greatest possible efficiency.

THE APEX PROGRAM

Apex is one of the most rural communities in Wake County, North Carolina. Although located only 20 miles from Raleigh, the character of the Apex population and its problems of providing adequate occupational education more closely resemble the typical rural communities of North Carolina, and the South as a whole, than the urban areas. The former agrarian nature of the Apex economy is undergoing transition toward industrialization. The community cannot absorb the products of its schools into its immediate labor force. The socio-economic level of the community is relatively low; the per capita income is below the average for Wake County and for North Carolina. The proportion of black youths, 50 percent, is the highest for any area in Wake County, and is higher than the proportion of blacks in the total North Carolina population. The school dropout rate is approximately 40 percent, and the academic achievement level is the lowest of any of the Wake County attendance areas.

All of the above factors contributed to the selection of the Apex attendance area as the site for exploratory work in the development of a total occupational education program. Furthermore, the goals of

occupational education which relate to adequate and appropriate preparation for employment are closely related to the national goals of alleviating poverty, minimizing unemployment, maximizing the productive contribution of each member to society, and maintaining a healthy, dynamic economy. Obviously, Apex is an economically depressed area and could benefit greatly from an integrated occupational education program.

A three-year allocation of approximately $400,000 has been awarded the Wake County School System to establish the total occupational education program in the Apex attendance area. The central participants in the project are the 2220 students in the four Apex schools (Holly Springs Elementary School, grades 1-3, 160 students; A. V. Baucom Elementary School, grades 1-3, 485 students; Apex Consolidated School, grades 4-8, 965 students; and Apex High School, grades 9-12, 610 students) and the 75 administrators and teachers who operate the program, as well as parents and other community members.

The Exemplary Features and General Strategies

The main exemplary feature of the program rests in its organizational context, the total occupational education approach. The rationale for the development of both the approach and the program came from two sources, the model for education for occupational proficiency (Coster, Morgan and Dane, 1969) and the general theoretical framework of Gestalt psychology. The occupational proficiency model was developed at the Center for Occupational Education to serve as an initial step in translating into reality those national goals relative to occupational education. For the purposes of this paper, it is not necessary to provide a detailed

examination of the model; however, it should be noted that the model is firmly grounded in the concerns expressed by Congress in legislative and Congressional documents and that it encompasses the totality of preparation for work within, without, and between the public school system and the world of work.

The theories advanced by the Gestalt psychologists hold, in essence, that the configuration supercedes the structural elements in the organizational pattern or mode of learning (Woodworth and Schlosberg, 1954). Applied to occupational education, this means that the total program of occupational education in a school system exceeds the summation of its component parts. [This concept is not limited to the Gestalt psychologists; it prevails in such fields as operations research, personnel management, and human engineering (McCormick, 1964).]

The holistic viewpoint derived from the model and Gestalt psychology pervades the entire Apex program. The program strategies break with tradition not only by articulating occupational education programs within the lower, middle, and upper grades, but also by integrating academic and occupational education within the context of a total approach to career planning and preparation. The implementation of a total school system commitment to occupational education, which manifests the five main ideas contained in House Report 1647, requires a total community commitment to occupational education. This total commitment is the basic strategy for the Apex exemplary program.

The first element of the strategy is involvement of the school faculty, including administrative personnel, vocational and nonvocational teachers, and guidance and counseling personnel. The changes to be

wrought are internal, not external. Curricular modifications, therefore, are to be accomplished through adoption and integration to effect a total curriculum that is relevant to the demands of the contemporary world of work. The personnel added to the schools' faculty essentially function as catalysts to effect internal changes in the curriculum so that the experiences provided students by the school will focus directly on the potential occupational relevance.

The approach selected to bring about the desired curricular changes is inservice teacher training. Summer workshops for teachers in the target schools will be conducted to (1) provide orientation to the career guidance frame of reference within which the project will operate, (2) present teachers with a methodology for incorporating occupational information into academic instruction in a manner which will enhance the relevancy to the students, (3) provide guidance for teachers in formulating lesson plans which will include specific occupational information appropriate for the grade level, (4) assist teachers in planning for individualized instruction in specific occupational areas for interested students and (5) assist teachers in the development of courses of instruction for each subject matter area on a unit by unit basis which will permit the incorporation of occupational materials of many types (i.e., printed, audio-visuals, speakers, field trips, etc.) into the regular curriculum.

One of the tangible products of the workshops, thus, will be units of instruction for each subject area at each grade level indicating the types and amounts of occupational information available for instructional purposes. Within this framework the classroom teacher may choose the type of material that is most closely related to the methodology of instruction that he normally uses in classroom situations.

The modification of traditional attitudes which define the success of students in terms of academic achievement is important for the effectiveness of inservice teacher training. Success is to be based on achievement commensurate with the individual student's attributes. Hence, the project is designed to provide increased alternatives to students so that academic failure is not necessarily equated with occupational failure.

The inservice training program initiated with the summer workshop will be continued during the school year by the grade level coordinators. One function of the coordinator will be to assist teachers in the implementation of the integrated curriculum. This function will be facilitated by: (1) providing "release time" for teachers for planning conferences with the coordinator, and (2) utilizing the coordinator as a scheduler and expeditor in order to have the proper occupational materials in the right place at the right time.

The second element in the strategy is the involvement of the total community. Bryan (1967) has demonstrated the effectiveness of involving the community in the development and evaluation of a program of occupational education. The practices developed by Bryan will be introduced into the Apex system in order to provide for both program development and acceptance, as well as for continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

Furthermore, in small rural schools such as those in Apex, financial and personnel considerations prevent the school system from offering the range of occupational preparation programs which the students need. In these cases, the school must of necessity turn to the community for additional training resources. This point is demonstrated in studies by

Agan (1968), and Horner, Peterson and Harwill (1969). Thus, cooperative education programs will be expanded as part of the Apex program. In addition, the project provides for the employment of skilled craftsmen in the community to serve as instructors for short courses in vestibule-type programs to prepare students who have not had skill training courses for job entry.

The concept of vestibule training generally refers to training in an industrial setting prior to job assignment. In the Apex program, the vestibule is placed at the school. In the interest of equipping all students who leave school with a salable skill, provisions are being made to offer short-term, intensive training programs to students, either after they have decided to drop out of school or immediately prior to completing high school. Special instructors, as mentioned above, will be employed for that purpose.

The vestibule concept, as used here, may be thought of as "Operation Second Chance" for those students who are dropping out of school. If the student has not had the opportunity to prepare for employment, then the project allows the system to adjust to the student's needs to offer him intensive training. Hopefully, "Operation Second Change" will result in a reexamination of his decision to leave school and will enable him to continue his education.

The third element in the strategy is the occupational environment. The implementation of a program of occupational exploration and information, work experience and cooperative education, and placement, must take into account the total occupational environment of the school community. In the Apex case, the occupational environment is broader than the school

community inasmuch as the labor market for a relatively large number of Apex citizens is located in the metropolitan area of Raleigh. In recognition of the limited job opportunities in the target area, the project provides for the transportation of students to the larger metropolitan area for cooperative education and work experience. Placement, too, will involve the identification and cooperation with business and industry not only in Apex, but also in Raleigh.

The Implementation Plan

The Apex program for occupational education is designed to provide specifically for four phases: (1) increased attention to counseling and placement, (2) introduction of occupational education into the lower grades, (3) expansion of occupational education in the middle grades, and (4) provision for additional occupational education and guidance services in the upper grades. Before proceeding to a discussion of the actual procedures for implementing this type of program in the Apex school system, the organizational schema of the program personnel will be discussed and a list of process objectives for the program will be presented. The section dealing with the lines of authority and personnel functions represents, in effect, the program's delivery system, and an understanding of this system is essential to an understanding of the program. The process objectives represent those programmatic changes being made in the system to effect the program delivery. The product objectives, or goals, of the Apex exemplary program refer to behavioral changes in the students, parents, teachers and administrative personnel resulting from the program, and will be presented in the Appendix of this paper.

Organizational Context

The administrative structure for the program is shown schematically in Figure 1. The personnel employed in the project are employed as professional staff of the Wake County Public Schools and are subject to personnel policies which have been adopted by the Wake County School Board.

The Superintendent of Schools, acting for and with the consent of the Wake County School Board, will appoint a National Advisory Council composed of teachers, guidance personnel, administrators, business, industrial, and professional leaders from all over the United States. This council will assist in the initiation and evaluation of the project and in assessing the extent to which the legislative intent has been fulfilled.

The Project Director reports to the Superintendent of Schools through the Director of Instruction. The Project Director will be responsible for directing the work of the project staff in conjunction with the principal of each of the four participating schools. The Project Director, however, will be held responsible for insuring that the product objectives of the project are fulfilled. His authority reflects that responsibility.

The personnel positions directly responsible to the Project Director have been designed to insure that the aspects of the proposed project relating to the five aspects of Grant Venn's Policy Paper AVL V70-1 (1969) (p. 2) are complied with to the fullest possible extent.

To a large degree, the Associate Project Director serves to coordinate the various aspects of the project, and is directly supervised by the Project Director. The Associate Project Director is responsible for conducting weekly conferences with project personnel and maintaining the information flow among them so that work will neither be replicated nor

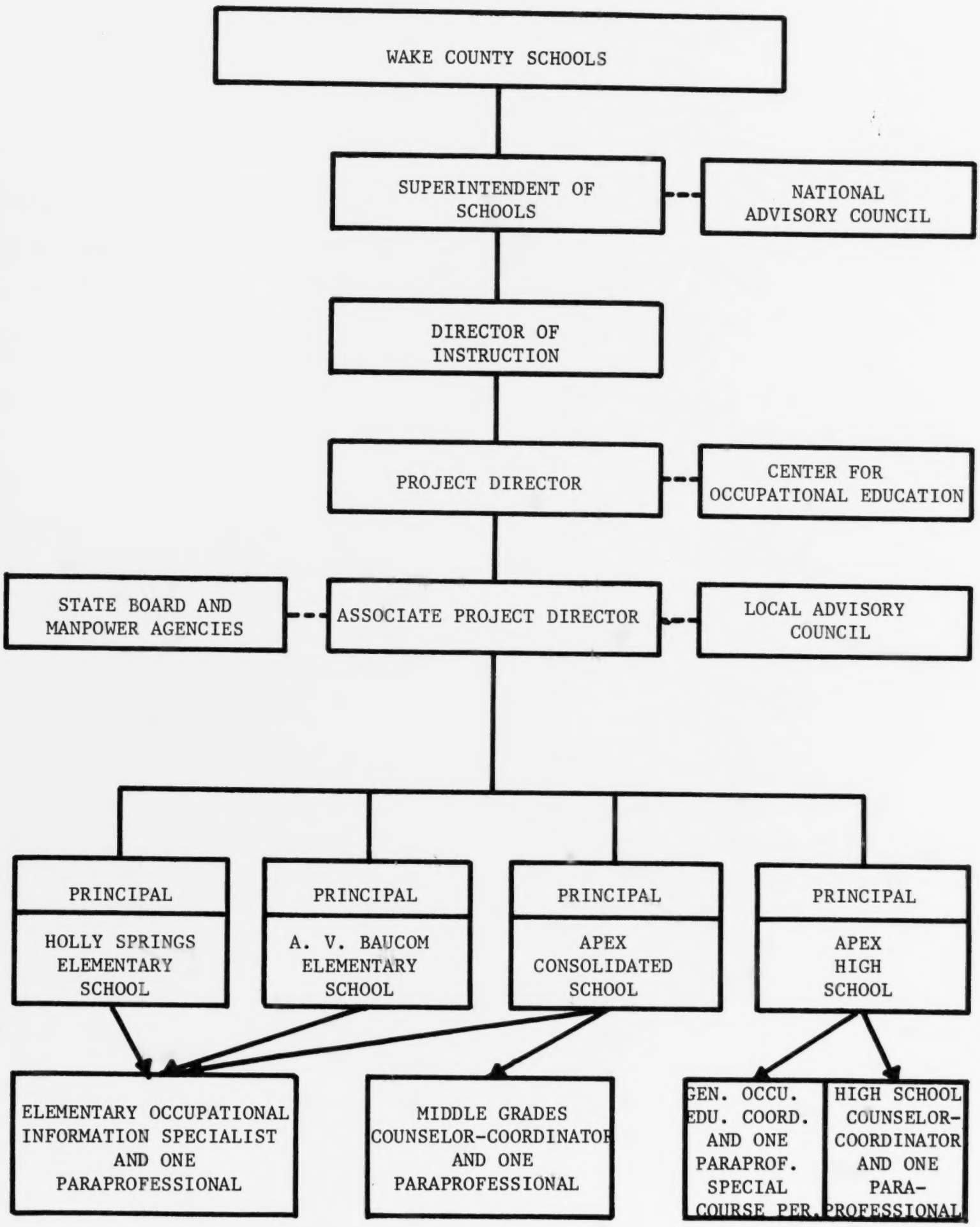

FIGURE 1

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

overlooked. He has line authority over all other project personnel via the Principal. He is also responsible for the community involvement operation and for coordination of this proposed phase with other agencies in fulfilling the objectives of the program. With the cooperation of the Project Director and other staff members, he is responsible for the in-service workshop, and the gathering and cataloging of project activities. Additional duites are preparing quarterly, annual and final reports in cooperation with other staff members and supervising the activities of a Secretary.

At the elementary level (grades 1-5), the Elementary Occupational Information Specialist will serve mainly as a consultant to teachers for incorporating occupational information into the existing subject matter. This consultant service will be divided on the basis of need among three schools in grades 1-5. He will serve approximately 1000 students via the classroom teachers (a Paraprofessional will take over the classroom so that the teacher can consult with the Elementary Occupational Information Specialist). The position was designed with respect to aspect 1.

At the junior high school level (grades 6-8), classroom activities will be combined with the Occupational Information Center, on-site observation of work, simulated work and decision-making experiences, and a group guidance program. The Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator will supervise the activities of one Paraprofessional, who will be concerned with on-site observation and work simulation. The Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator and his Paraprofessional will serve approximately 600 students; the emphasis will be on the potential dropouts. This position was designed with respect to aspects 1 and 2.

At the high school level and for the potential dropouts at the junior high school level, the General Occupational Education Coordinator will establish training programs to provide each student with entry level skills based on labor market demands and student abilities. He will use Special Courses Personnel to install these courses. The Special Courses Personnel have job skills in specific areas and may have had little formal education, but have had years of experience. When possible, he will also attempt to bring in programs of Manpower (e.g., Neighborhood Youth Corps) and other agencies. He will supervise one Paraprofessional and he will also attempt to bring in community resources and equipment. He will serve approximately 50 students at the junior high school level, and 400 at the high school level. The establishment of his position was aimed at fulfilling aspects 2 and 3. The High School Counselor-Coordinator is responsible for intensive occupational counseling of students in their last two years of school and of potential dropouts prior to the time of their dropping out. He is also responsible for placing, with cooperation from existing agencies, all persons under 21 years of age who seek employment and for consulting with teachers on other functions. One Paraprofessional who will assist in the aforementioned activities will be under his supervision.

As noted above, the Paraprofessionals will perform such duties as deemed necessary by the project personnel to whom they have been assigned, in order to carry out the process objectives of the program.

Although the preceding description of the organization of the Apex program has been brief, it should serve as an orientation to the kind of personnel necessary to run the program. It is worthwhile to reiterate at

this point that the intent of the Apex program is not to effect massive changes in the manner in which information is presented in the schools, but rather is to influence change by revising content and adding personnel with special duties relevant to occupational education. Thus the teacher, upon whom the success of the program ultimately depends, is not being forced to radically change teaching methods, but is to introduce new content into the instructional program.

Process Objectives

In order to accomplish the goals of the Apex program, a number of process objectives have been defined. As mentioned above, process objectives refer specifically to those changes in the educational program which must be effected in order for the Apex program to be a success. These objectives vary from level to level within the school system, to reflect what is to be accomplished at that level. The additional personnel who have been placed in the Apex school system and the inservice training experiences provided the teachers are directed toward insuring that each of these process objectives is implemented.

The all-inclusive goal of the Apex exemplary program is to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive occupational education program in a rural school system. This goal will be achieved if the following process objectives are realized at the respective levels of the Apex school system.

The program at the elementary school level will accomplish:

1. Integration of occupational information with the basic academic material and the exposure of each student to a range of occupations within the context of his level of maturity.

2. Discussion of habits and attitudes for employability (i.e., dependability, responsibility, appreciation of quality, neatness, carefulness, etc.).

The objectives to be realized by the program at the junior high school level are:

1. Integration of occupational information (i.e., type of work, work conditions, requisite skills, licenses, applications, job interviews, etc.) with basic academic materials.

2. Exploration of attitudes toward occupational education particularly by the students, and also by parents and school personnel.

3. Investigation by students of self-characteristics (aptitudes, interests, attitudes toward self, etc.).

4. Acquaintance of students with elementary concepts of career decision making, including the choice and consequence of alternatives.

5. Utilization of "hands-on" experience in occupational laboratories and on-site observation of work.

6. Establishment of skill training programs.

The high school occupational education program will effect:

1. Integration of occupational information with academic materials.

2. Expansion of opportunities for students in cooperative education and work-study programs.

3. Establishment and direction of skill training laboratories.

4. Utilization of intense placement-counseling services.

5. Continued exploration of attitudes towards occupational education and towards the self.

Additionally, the counseling-placement function will be intensified at all levels in the school system to effect:

1. Availability of current information about the occupational environment particularly in the community, and also in the state and nation.

2. Counseling each student regarding his capabilities and probabilities of success in various occupations, perhaps based on a series of aptitude and interest tests, combined with each individual's opinions and attitudes.

3. Intensification of individual counseling for students immediately prior to leaving school.

4. Provision for placement services.

5. Direct participation of students in all phases of the total occupational education program by working with parents and school personnel.

It is hoped that, by making the above process objectives reasonably general, the organizational personnel (Figure 1) who are directly responsible for the further delineation of these objectives would not be restricted to a single implementive method, but would be able to select the ones most appropriate for their school system.

The Elementary School Program

The elementary school program is addressed to combining occupational information and discussions regarding attitudes and work habits with the on-going curricular programs. Occupational education in elementary schools, therefore, is thought of as an integral part of the elementary curriculum, not as additional subjects to be added to the program of study.

As students progress through school, new occupations will be introduced into their spheres of experience. This intent will be accomplished through the use of supplementary curricular materials (including films, slides, etc.), field trips, guest speakers from the community, and guest speakers who are high school students enrolled in cooperative education programs. The curricular materials will provide information about the structure of occupations which affect the lives of the students, to demonstrate how the persons with whom the students are in immediate contact contribute to the economic productivity of society through their work. The positive value of work will be stressed, as well as the personal and social significance of the performance of an individual in his job. The curricular materials selected will relate to a constantly expanding occupational environment commensurate with the level of maturity of the students.

The inservice training workshops will serve to help teachers select the appropriate materials to be incorporated into the program. The Elementary Occupational Education Specialist, however, will be the key to implementing the program. This specialist will assist teachers in selecting materials, in arranging for field trips and special programs, and in conducting seminars throughout the school year designed to assist the teachers in relating their curriculums to the world of work.

The Middle Grades Program

The middle grades program will be centered in an Occupational Resources Center, managed by the Middle Grades Counselor Coordinator. The Center will perform four essential functions for the middle grades. First, it will serve as a centralized source of occupational materials

for use by students and teachers. Second, the Center, through the Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator, will serve as a locale for individual student counseling and for occupational exploration, as a point of departure for field trips and on-site observations, and as a laboratory for exercises in career decision making. Third, it will serve as a locale for group guidance programs to be conducted by the Counselor-Coordinator in cooperation with the teachers in the school. Fourth, the Center will serve as a curriculum laboratory to be used by teachers in incorporating occupational education materials in their curriculum and as a site for inservice seminars and workshops.

The Occupational Resources Center will serve as the focus and catalytic agent for expanded career orientation and exploration. Curricular changes will be largely internal. The scope of the existing middle grades curriculum precludes the proliferation of courses at this level; therefore, the effort will be directed toward integration within the existing curriculum. Programs now in the school, such as industrial arts, agriculture, and home economics, will serve to provide the "hands-on" exploratory experiences. The Center will provide additional experiences, designed to explore the total range of the occupational structure and to emphasize occupations which are not being included by existing courses in the school. Emphasis will be placed on sales, clerical, service and health occupations in order to expand the horizons for these occupations.

Since the target school is located in an economically disadvantaged area with a relatively high dropout rate in the school system, the project provides for the "vestibule training program" described on page 9. Students who have reached the ages of 14-16 and who have decided to

withdraw from school will be offered the opportunity to obtain intensive skill training in the vestibule school. Here the Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator will work closely with the General Occupational Education Coordinator in identifying potential dropouts, providing intensive counseling, and arranging for specialized skill training. The intent is not to encourage students to drop out from school, but to provide both the student and the school system with a second chance at a more occupationally relevant education program.

The High School Program

The Apex exemplary program provides for two additional functions within the secondary school: placement services and intensive training programs. The placement service will be performed by the High School Counselor-Coordinator. His goal is to provide placement services for all students who either leave school prior to graduation or who graduate from high school. The General Occupational Education Coordinator will be responsible for establishing specialized training programs for students who are likely to leave school with or without a high school diploma, and who have not developed a salable skill in school.

The Wake County schools have expanded their cooperative education programs greatly during the past five years and offer programs in sales and industrial occupations. This project provides for the expansion of cooperative education with special emphasis on locating and placing students in businesses in the greater Raleigh Metropolitan area. Both the General Occupational Education Coordinator and the High School Counselor-Coordinator will assist in this program.

The Counseling-Placement Program

The project is designed to provide for both the intensification of the occupational guidance program and for the introduction of the placement function. The Associate Project Director, the High School Counselor-Coordinator, the Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator, and the Elementary Occupational Information Specialist are expected to be grounded in the theory and practice of guidance and career-development concepts.

Concentrated effort will be placed on counseling potential school dropouts throughout the continuum with provisions for immediate attention to changing their curricular experiences. This intensive counseling primarily will be provided by the Middle Grades Counselor-Coordinator and the High School Counselor-Coordinator. As noted previously, the High School Counselor-Coordinator will also function as a placement officer for the secondary school, and when needed, in the junior high school. The objective of this phase of the program is to place all students who leave school, either by graduation or prior to graduation, in an appropriate job or in further schooling.

The innovation to be introduced in the counseling and placement program is the institution of a system-wide attribute information dossier for each student, starting in the middle grades. This system will be used as the basis for maximizing the significance and relevance of the decision-making process to each individual student. Career plans in the developmental stages will be recorded as part of the total attribute information system.

In summary, the total program is designed to expand exploration and occupational information to the lower and middle grades, to increase

opportunities for work experience and cooperative education, to provide for specialized skill training prior to leaving school, and to initiate a placement service in the school system integrated with the counseling function.

CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped that the description of the Apex Exemplary Program in Occupational Education might be helpful to others by serving as a "stepping-stone" to the development of general guidelines for designing programs of occupational education within the context of contemporary American society. Hopefully, the description will at least stimulate thought in this particularly critical direction. Since the program itself is only now getting underway, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about its actual or potential effects. Provisions have been made for evaluation of the program's effectiveness, but obviously the evaluation must await the operation of the program and the gathering of data. The Appendix presents the list of product objectives which will define the success or failure of the Apex program. The process objectives presented earlier related solely to the changes made in the educational program in order to effect delivery. The product objectives relate to actual changes in the students', parents', teachers', and administrative personnel's behavior as a result of their participation in the program.

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APPENDIX

The Product Objectives

As stated above, the product objectives, or goals, are defined in terms of behavioral changes. The primary objectives are those which can be seen as direct outcomes of the processes of the Apex exemplary program. It is also hoped that other less directly related changes in behavior will be elicited by the program; these constitute the secondary objectives.

Primary Objectives

1. To increase student (grades 4-12) interest in academic subjects.
2. To increase student (grades 6-12) awareness of their self attributes, personality traits, aptitudes, abilities and interests.
3. To increase the positiveness of student (grades 6-12) attitudes toward themselves and others.
4. To increase the positiveness of student (grades 6-12), parent, teacher, and administrative personnel attitudes toward occupational education.
5. To increase student (grades 6-12) knowledge of occupations and occupational environments.
6. To increase student (grades 6-12) interest in obtaining job entry level skills.
7. To increase student (grades 9-12) and teacher satisfaction with curricular offerings.
8. To increase student interest (grades 10-12) in postsecondary training.
9. To have each student (grades 1-12) know the occupations of each member of his immediate family (mother, father, brothers, sisters).
10. To increase by 5 per year the number of "good" work habits each student

(grades 1-12) can list.

11. To increase by 5 per year the number of occupations that students (grades 1-5) can list.
12. To increase by 10 percent per year the percentage of high school students enrolled in vocational programs.
13. To increase by 10 percent per year the percentage of students (grades 6-12) participating in work experience programs.
14. To increase by 10 percent per year the percentage of students applying for postsecondary education.
15. To increase by two per year the number of high school course offerings in vocational areas.
16. To increase by 15 percent per year the percentage of requests for career guidance services (grades 6-12).
17. To increase by 20 percent per year the percentage of parental conferences with both guidance and project personnel.
18. To increase to 100 percent of enrolled students within the three years of the program the percentage of students using the occupational information centers (grades 4-12).
19. To increase to 100 percent in the three years of the project the percentage of school dropouts and school graduates with job entry level skills, who do not plan to enter a postsecondary school.
20. To place 100 percent of graduates and dropouts that seek employment and reemployment within the three years of the program.

Secondary Objectives

1. To increase by ___ centiles per year the average academic achievement students (grades 1-12) as measured by the California Test of Basic Skills.

2. To decrease by ___ percent per year the dropout rate (grades 6-12).

3. To decrease by ___ percent per year the absentee rate (grades 1-12).

4. To decrease by ___ percent per year the percentage of grade failures without altering academic standards (grades 1-12).